

## CLAIMS

1. A method for operating a transport interface to a plurality of local Fibre Channel ports, said method comprising:

5 locally generating ready indications for said plurality of local Fibre Channel ports;  
and

distributing transmission of said ready indications among said local Fibre Channel ports responsive to a desired bandwidth sharing.

10 2. The method of claim 1 wherein said ready indications are generated locally within said transport interface.

3. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

receiving a buffer credit value from a first one of said local Fibre Channel ports;

15 modifying said buffer credit value responsive to buffer space within said transport interface; and

transmitting said modified buffer credit value to a remote Fibre Channel port via a transport network.

4. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

controlling transmission of said ready indications to said local Fibre Channel ports responsive to availability of buffer space at a remote transport interface.

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5. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

relaying traffic from said plurality of local Fibre Channel ports to a plurality of remote Fibre Channel ports via a transport network; and

wherein combined maximum data rates of Fibre Channel links terminated by said plurality of Fibre Channel ports through said transport network exceeds bandwidth available via said transport network.

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6. The method of claim 5 further comprising:

suppressing relaying of ready indications from said plurality of remote Fibre Channel ports to said plurality of local Fibre Channel ports.

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7. The method of claim 1 wherein said desired bandwidth sharing comprises a default equal sharing of bandwidth among said local Fibre Channel ports.

8. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

receiving input selecting said desired bandwidth sharing.

5 9. A computer program product for operating a transport interface to a plurality of local Fibre Channel ports, said product comprising:

code that causes local generation of ready indications for said plurality of local Fibre Channel ports;

code that causes distribution of transmission of said ready indications among said  
10 local Fibre Channel ports responsive to a desired bandwidth sharing; and  
a computer-readable storage medium that stores the codes.

10. The product of claim 9 wherein said ready indications are generated locally within said transport interface.

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11. The product of claim 9 further comprising:

code that causes reception of a buffer credit value from a first one of said local Fibre Channel ports;

code that causes modification of said buffer credit value responsive to buffer space within said transport interface; and

code that causes transmission of said modified buffer credit value to a remote  
5 Fibre Channel port via a transport network.

12. The product of claim 9 further comprising:

code that causes control of transmission of said ready indications to said local  
Fibre Channel ports responsive to availability of buffer space at a remote transport  
10 interface.

13. The product of claim 9 further comprising:

code that causes relaying of traffic from said plurality of local Fibre Channel ports  
to a plurality of remote Fibre Channel ports via a transport network; and

15 wherein combined maximum data rates of Fibre Channel links terminated by said  
plurality of Fibre Channel ports through said transport network exceeds bandwidth  
available via said transport network.

14. The product of claim 13 further comprising:

code that suppresses relaying ready indications from said plurality of remote Fibre Channel ports to said plurality of local Fibre Channel ports.

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15. The product of claim 9 wherein said desired bandwidth sharing comprises a default equal sharing of bandwidth among said local Fibre Channel ports.

16. The product of claim 9 further comprising:

10 code that causes receipt of input selecting said desired bandwidth sharing.

17. Apparatus for operating a transport interface to a plurality of local Fibre Channel ports, said apparatus comprising:

15 means for locally generating ready indications for said plurality of local Fibre Channel ports; and

means for distributing transmission of said ready indications among said local Fibre Channel ports responsive to a desired bandwidth sharing.

18. Apparatus for operating a transport interface to a plurality of local Fibre Channel ports, said apparatus comprising:

an integrated circuit or plurality of integrated circuits that locally generate ready  
5 indications for said plurality of local Fibre Channel ports and distribute transmission of  
said ready indications among said local Fibre Channel ports responsive to a desired  
bandwidth sharing.

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